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ABSTRACT

When one sets out to get a job for the first time or to change to a different job, knowing how to do it the right way is a vital concern. It is a concern that can easily spell the difference between success and failure. Individuals need to know what they are aiming for so they can set their sights accordingly and concentrate only on their objectives. Presented is information on job search tips, a letter of introduction, the resume, the interview, the follow-up, and accepting a job offer. (Author)

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HOW TO MAKE YOUR JOB SEARCH SUCCESSFUL

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How To Make Your Job Search Successful

Introduction

When you set out to get a job for the first time or to change to a different job, knowing how to do it the right way is a vital concern. It is a concern that can easily spell the difference between success and failure. You need to know what you are aiming for so you can set your sights accordingly and concentrate only on your objectives. Moreover, an employer expects you to know what it is you seek and he hopes to find it concisely stated in your resume'. Your personal qualifications and the job requirements must fit before an employer will consider you favorably. Why should an employer be interested in you? Can he tell from your resume' what you do best? What have you done in the last two or three years to prepare yourself or to remain competitive?

Your objective, whatever it is, can probably be realistic and you can expect to succeed if you are equipped to make a contribution to your potential employers success, if your salary requirements are reasonable for that contribution, if you fit into his prefered age brackets, and if you maintain a certain degree of flexibility in your desires. However, your expected results are always affected, favorably or otherwise, by such factors as the economic climate of the country, whether the position desired is scarce or plentiful, and whether you are a unique or outstanding individual. Almost always, you will have competition for that one best job, either a little or a lot, but someone is going to succeed and it can be you if you are able to convince the employer.

What is really needed for an effective job search is a comprehensive plan for marketing yourself and then determination, persistence, and drive on your part to make the plan produce for you. Your long range purpose of this plan is to get the right job for you; the short term goal is to secure interviews. So, decide at the beginning that you are a marketing manager, with you as the product. Plan to answer ads, write employers directly, make use of business and personal contacts, contact good employment agencies, and finally, use other sources such as school and association placement services. A big psychological plus for you will be to build and maintain a good personal attitude and pace. Be positive! Maintain your enthusiasm, your momentum, and don't get discouraged. Think and act like a successful person and be self confident. Stress your strongest qualifications, and if all this effort doesn't produce the right job, then do it again. Perhaps in the first effort, the employers just did not have job openings. Timing can be a main factor in job availability. One or two months later, circumstances may be entirely different and this time, in your favor.

Here are some of the factors which influence the length of time necessary for completing a search and landing the right position:

1. Economic conditions in general
2. Economic conditions in your field
3. Competition in your field in your geographic area
4. Your skills, competence, and experience
5. Your resume' and letters
6. How well you handle interviews
7. How badly an employer needs to fill a position
8. What appeals to an interviewer

Your control of just these factors alone is limited to items 4, 5, and 6. In some cases, particularly with students, skills and experience may be very limited. Therefore, a good resume' and good cover letters are essential, plus careful preparation for and handling of your interviews.

Job Search Tips

1. Don't quit your present job until you have secured a new one. You are in a stronger position if you search while still employed. It may be harder to do and may be inconvenient, but it is strongly recommended.

2. Act without delay once a job change position has been reached. Whether you make a voluntary decision to search or if your employer decides to terminate you for whatever reason, move into your program quickly.

3. Maintain a good attitude about yourself and your employment problem. No one else bears the responsibility for your successful search but you. Prepare yourself for an aggressive campaign and keep your thinking positive. Your thinking absolutely must be positive. It shows all over so cast out all negatives. Think in terms of success. Expect the best. Dress the part, and down deep, have a solid belief in yourself and your search. No one is really responsible for finding that new job except yourself, so accept that fact at the beginning.

4. Be patient knowing that from one to three months of hard work on your part may be required. Keep in mind that right job.

5. Make a personal evaluation of yourself. You can help yourself immensely by considering how other people see you. With a sincere effort to be objective, say to yourself:

   A. What can I do best?
   B. In what area have I contributed most?
   C. Am I a planner or an administrator?
   D. Am I better at leading or following?
   E. In what area is the bulk of my work experience?
   F. What are my real talents?
   G. What are my strengths and weaknesses?

6. Don't procrastinate in your job search. Do the things you should do when they should be done.

7. Use references correctly, and they can be very helpful. Even though individual references are not listed in your resume', you need to have such a list available when requested. First, decide which individuals know your accomplishments best and will give fair but favorable references. Add the business contacts of as high a level as possible, who have done business with you or know you well. Include civic, professional, or association leaders who know your abilities. As a couteous business practice, and a very practical matter, be sure to clear with each individual his willingness to be your reference, Do it by phone, by letter, or with a personal visit, but be sure it is done. Limit your list of references to about 4 or 6 at most, depending on your total job history. On your list, show the reference's name, company affiliation, title, street address, city, state, zip code, and telephone number including the area code.

8. Think carefully before accepting a job offer if you are currently employed. If you are unemployed or about to be, then economic and other factors may signal a quick acceptance of a job offer.

Letter of Introduction

Whenever you mail or present your resume' to a personnel office, always include a letter of introduction. It should be limited to three or four paragraphs, never to exceed one page. The letter must be typed and should be personalized as much as posible, so the reader and his institution feel you are writing specifically to them. It should not convey the aspect of a form letter sent to a multitude of potential employers. Nor should it contain a duplication of information in your resume'. The sincerity and genuineness displayed in your letter of introduction will undoubtedly obtain for you more consideration than great detailed quantities of information.

Resume'

Resumes may run one page for a younger person; resumes of two pages could be expected from persons whose employment histories are filled with years of growth and achievement. The resume' should be easy to read and it should be graphically easy to follow. Dates and headings are used to lead the reader. Keep in mind that a personnel manager probably reads resumes for several hours each day. If yours is concise and correct, you stand a better chance of having your message remembered.

Your use of white space is most important in creating an impression of neatness and orderliness. Space can be used to isolate important points to which you want to draw attention. Sufficient spacing between all elements help to create a clean, pleasing impression. Crowding too many details too close together results in an untidy appearance. Your method of organizing the separate elements of your resume' is not as important as the fact you show some kind of orderly, reasonable process. Unless you have proven that you have a better idea, it is wisest to stick to a rather conventional, conservative lay-out with straight lines and noneradic paragraphing.

Because many resumes are usually needed, some kind of reproduction medium is a necessity. Carbon copies of resumes should be kept for your file, but they should never be sent to an employer. Resumes can be reproduced by offset printing or xeroxing; this process is winning popularity because it offers a more formal, permanent and elegant resume, and the cost is usually quite low.

References may be or may not be included. Some interviewers prefer to see them on the resume. References related to your work experience are prefered to those of social acquaintances. Courtesy dictates that you ask references' permission before using their names. The names of relatives are never used.

Work experience is an essential ingredient of any resume. Dates should be given along with company addresses and a brief description of the work you did. Your job list should begin with the last job you held. It should include listing in reverse order, ending with the earliest. Some applicants have made strong cases for themselves because they have held jobs with the same company for a considerable length of time. Other applicants who have had successively more responsible jobs emphasize that growing responsibility. Since any institution considering you likes to think that you will be a success, it is also good to note a promotion

or recognition that has come your way as a result of success in a job. Be frank about your accomplishments, stating them briefly and factually. Demonstrated ability and progress may mean more to an interviewer than the simple fact that you held a certain job. Significant minor experience, if it relates in any way to the job you are seeking, may help you and should be included.

Since your major courses in college and your showing in those courses indicate your interests and abilities, you should have a section in your resume' touching on the highlights. Grades are an important part of the picture, but not the only part. Many jobs are specially fitted for a well-rounded individual. The fact that you have been chosen as a member by honorary groups or elected to professional societies in your field speaks well for your future in that field. If you belong to purely social organizations, list them. A large part of anyone's success in a new job grows out of his ability to get along with his fellow workers. A demonstrated social awareness can be a point in your favor. If you participated in activities to an extent that you were recognized by awards of offices, mention those also. Leadership quality is welcome everywhere.

It is a literal fact that nearly everyone has something to offer if he will only analyze his abilities, talents, and interests correctly, and stress his strong points as they relate to the job you are seeking. If you can do that successfully in your resume' and if you follow through with it in your interviews, you need have little doubt that you will sooner or later find an institution which has been looking for you.

Interview

An individual most certainly will have competition for a job, and he should therefore be prepared for it, but if you have a good resume', good educational training, a willingness to give 100 per cent, and you can wrap up all this in good interviews, you won't have to worry so much about competition. The key word here is "interviews". You need as many as you can get. With each succeeding one, you should become better at handling yourself. The interview is where you get hired or passed over. The interview is an opportunity for both you and the potential employer to begin to get acquainted. It is a mutual check up on each other to see if you and the position match. An employer has two basic aims: to get the right person for the job and to get a person who can contribute something to the institution's goals. Therefore, an interview is not a casual conversation; it is a serious matter. It can be friendly and very cordial, but it is still serious. For any applicant, there are two cardinal rules: be prepared and be yourself. Your success in a job search may well be determined by how you handle yourself in an interview.

Your interviewer may be in personnel or he may turn out to be your new boss. He can be excellent, well-trained, a professional, badly trained, opinionated, or a rank amateur. He may be too busy to talk enough to you or have alot of extra time for chit-chat, but whatever he is, there he is. It's up to you to be alert and handle yourself accordingly.

An employer tries to determine if you are the best person with the right qualifications and the finest potential to fill the job. He is looking for these things in an employee:

1. A fairly normal human being, mature regardless of age, who is realistic and stable.

2. Ability and aptitude.

3. Training and experience.

4. Willingness to learn and work.

5. Congeniality.

6. Desire to help accomplish the goals.

The employment interview is one of the most important events in the average person's experience for the obvious reason that the twenty or thirty minutes he spends with the interviewer may determine the entire future course of his life. Yet, interviewers are continually amazed at the number of applicants that drift into job interviews without any apparent preparation and only the vaguest idea of what they are going to say. Their manner says "Well, here I am" and that's the end of it in more ways than one. Others although they undoubtedly do not intend to do so, create an impression of indifference by behaving as though they had dropped in between other appointments. These marks of inexperience can be avoided by knowing a little of what actually is expected of you and by making a few simple preparations before the interview. Like anything else that is worthwhile, the interview requires careful planning and preparation if it is to be well executed. Try to find some important facts about the institutions you'll be interviewing so that interview time need not be used up by the transfer of nonessentional information.

Here are some of the things you can do to get yourself ready:

1. Find out the exact place and time of the interview. This may sound almost too basic to mention, but it is an unfortunate applicant who assumes the interview is to be held at a certain place and then discovers shortly before the time that his appointment is somewhere else.

2. Write the time and the place down and keep the notation with you rather than relying on your memory.

3. Be certain you have your interviewer's full name and find out how to pronounce it if it looks difficult.

4. Do some research on the institution interviewing you. This will give you something besides yourself to talk about during your interview and provide material to form the questions you should ask. It will help to protect your own interests also.

5. Prepare your questions before you go in for the interview.

6. Bring a pencil and a pen that writes neatly.

Preparation involves getting your attitudes in order also. Recruiters look for self respect, direction, and a sense of responsibility. As in most other areas of life in which human relations govern the conduct of your affairs, assuming a courteous, mature, and generously outgoing posture will take you far.

Your personal appearance at the interview is the outward expression of your inner state of mind more often than not. Under any circumstance, being poorly dressed for an interview shows a marked lack of good taste and apathetic attitude. Appearance includes your sense of composure, your at ease conversation, and your handshake. These are intangible things but they are the things that convey confidence, a trait that you'd like in other people and something the interviewer wants to find in you.

Be punctual for your interview. If possible, try to be there several minutes ahead of time. Don't be filling out an application when the recruiter calls your name. Be well groomed. This is the occasion when your first impression is made upon the recruiter and, good or bad, it sticks in his mind. Be courteous and attentive. You must put your best foot forward. Be honest and above all, be yourself. Have a definite goal in mind. Remember you're looking for a position and the institution that you are interviewing is looking for an employee. You must sell yourself better than the individual who took the interview before you and better than the one who is taking it after you. The interview should provide information about the institution and give you the opportunity to sell yourself. The interviewer's objective is to determine if you are a good propect for employment. It is definitely an evaluation session, a key factor in deciding whether money should be invested to consider your application further. It provides an opportunity to interest you in the particular institution. Be friendly, sincere, and confident. Don't be flippant. Don't overtalk, and don't undertalk. Good questions indicate good planning in advance so don't ask questions to which you already know the answers. Maintain good poise and posture. Sit up straight, don't lean on your elbow or talk with your hands over your mouth. Look the recruiter in the eye, for this is the surest way to convince him you know what you are talking about. Follow the interviewer's lead. Let him set the pace unless he definitely passes the lead to you. Be sure to sell yourself. Be modest about your accomplishments while getting your points across. Show interest, but don't get lost in detail. You cannot rehearse your role in an upcoming interview because you don't know what questions will be given to you. Your best guide is to rely on your own native courtesy and good sense.

There are, however, some basic rules in situations common to most interviews which may help you if you know about them ahead of time:

1. It is normal for many people to be nervous, particularly in an interview. The interviewer is there because he wants to hire people, not because he wants to trip them up or embarrass them. You have the advantage over an applicant who walks into an interview cold. Your interviewer wants to hire you if you have something definite to offer his institution, and if he thinks you will fit into his staff.

2. Greet the interviewer by name as you enter his office.

3. Take your cues from him at the start. If he moves to shake hands, do so, but not unless he makes the first gesture. Wait until he offers you a chair before you sit down, unless he remains seated or sits down immediately.

4. Don't chew gum. Don't smoke unless he invites you to do so.

5. Be ready for at least one surprise question right at the beginning. A few interviewers favor one of the following:

   A. What can I do for you?
   B. Tell me about yourself.
   C. Why are you interested in this institution?

If you think those are easy questions to answer without some previous thought, just try it. You don't have time to flounder around. This is where preparation will count. If he wants to know what he can do for you, tell him that you would like to apply for a job at his institution, being as specific as you can. If he asks you to talk about yourself, tell those things which relate to the situation, your background, your education, whether you are married or single. Don't learn a speech by rote memory, but have a number of points in mind. Be informative without boasting or telling your troubles. As for the third question, if you have studied the institution's literature, you will not be at a loss for words.

6. Keep following his lead. Don't answer in just yes's and no's; on the other hand, don't talk too much. If you find yourself talking over a long time in a monologue, give the lead back to him by saying, "perhaps you have some other questions to ask me."

7. Sit up in your chair and look alert and interested at all times. Don't look tense but don't relax so much that you look slouchy. Show that you can be a wide awake, intelligent listener, as well as a talker.

8. Look your interviewer directly in the eye and keep doing it from time to time during your conversation. This is important, for nearly every interviewer is conscious of it. Remember to smile frequently at appropriate times.

9. Don't let your hands betray nervousness. Don't drum with your fingers or tap with a pencil.

10. A few interviewers like to do most of the talking and judge you by your reaction, through the interest, comprehension, and intelligence you show. Others hardly speak at all and for an amateur, these are the hardest with which to deal. Their attitude is that it is your job to sell yourself. That is where you have to call on your knowledge of yourself and your interest in his institution. In the final analysis, you will have to sell yourself.

11. Make sure that your good points get across to him. He won't know unless you tell him, but try to appear factual and sincere, rather than conceited. If you can mention your best qualities in relation to something concrete, so much the better.

12. Even if the recruiter does much of the talking, remember that you can lead him by asking questions which call in turn for a question you want to answer.

13. Most interviews will follow a rather simple question and answer format. If such is the case, your ability to answer quickly and intelligently if of great importance. If you are confused and contradictory, your cause is lost. The greatest preventative against contradictory answers is the plain truth. A frank answer even if it seems a little unfavorable to you is better by far than an exaggeration which make tangle you up in the next question.

14. Be ready to give an answer to the question, "What do you plan to be doing ten years from now?" This is a favorite question, and a popular alternative question is, "How much money do you expect to be earning in ten years?" The purpose is to determine your ambition, ability to plan ahead, and the soundness of your thinking. Do you want, vaguely, to get ahead, or are you going somewhere in particular.

15. Never make a negative reference about a former employer. If something went wrong, suggest that at least some of the blame must have been your own.

16. Conduct yourself as if you are determined to get the job you are discussing. Of course, you have other jobs in mind and the recruiter is aware of that, but he wants to think that you want a job with his institution.

17. He may steer the conversation into politics or economics, and this can be a ticklish situation. Hardly any recruiter will ask which politic party you prefer, rather he is likely to try to sound out your overall economic philosophy. Difference of opinion is a part of our heritage of freedom, but the job interview is no place for a political speech. Be honest in what you say and don't be evasive; however, at least in this one instance, try not to say more than necessary to answer the recruiter's broad line of questioning.

18. Try to avoid giving the impression that you have come in to look over possibilities and that you are not yet sure what you want. Wherever possible, apply for a specific job or field of work. It is not advisable to get too far out on a limb by saying you will not consider anything but one certain job.

19. Show the interviewer that you are interested, that you appreciate the opportunity he is giving you to present your case, and that you realize the demand on his time.

20. Ask some definite questions about the institution. Don't ask so many that the recruiter thinks you are afraid of work or are hesitating at the thought of joining his staff, but do show your interest. Have in mind two or three questions you want to ask him about the institution before you report for the interview. Also, keep in mind two or three good reasons why you are interested in this particular employer. The chances are excellent that you will be asked for your reasons.

21. Stick to the subject at hand.

22. If you are asked if you've ever been fired and you have been, frankness again is the answer. Tell him you've learned from your mistakes. Also, there is the possibility you got into a wrong job through a misunderstanding.

23. If you get the impression the interview is not going well and that you have already been rejected, don't let your discouragement show. You have nothing to lose by continuing the appearance of confidence and you may gain much. The last few minutes often change things. Once in a great while, an interviewer who is genuinely interested in your possibilities may seem to discourage you in order to test your reaction. If you remain confident and determined, you have probably made a good impression.

24. Don't take notes in an interview if you can help it. This is annoying and distracting to some recruiters. The best policy is to note on paper immediately after the interview everything you want to be sure to remember. If you are given application forms, be certain they are filled out completely and neatly. A messy application form can create as bad an impression as personal untidiness.

25. What if you impress the interviewer to the point that he offers you a job on the spot? If you are absolutely sure it is the one you want, accept with a definite yes. If you have the slightest doubt, if you do not want to accept without further thought or further interviews, play for time. You must not embarrass the person who has made you the offer. Be courteous and tactful in asking for time to think it over. Try to set a definite date when you can provide an answer. This will reassure him that you are giving his offer serious consideration. As further evidence of your interest, you may have the opportunity to arrange a trip to the institution to meet prospective associates.

26. You may be asked why you left your last two or three jobs. Return to college, better pay, and more responsibility are acceptable reasons. Be careful, however, not to give the impression that you are a job jumper or shopper.

27. Don't be too discouraged if no definite offer is made or no specific salary is discussed. The recruiter will probably wish to communicate with his office first or interview more applicants, before making any offers.

28. Most interviews last between twenty and thirty minutes. A glance at your watch will tell you if your time is almost up. Don't go on talking and talking. Some talk themselves into a job and then right out of it. Be alert to signs from the interviewer that the session is almost at an end. If he looks at his watch, you can be sure of it. If you still want the job, sum up your interest briefly, tell him you're interested and stop.

29. Be certain to thank the recruiter for his time and his consideration of you. Smile and show as much confidence in leaving as you did in arriving. If you have told him why you are interested in his institution and what you can offer, you have done all you can.

The following negative factors evaluated during the employment interview frequently lead to rejection of the applicant:

1. Poor personal appearance.
2. Overbearing, overagressive, and conceited.
3. Inability to express himself clearly; poor voice, diction, grammar.
4. Lack of planning for career; no purpose of goals.
5. Lack of interest and enthusiasm, passive, indifferent.
6. Lack of confidence and poise, nervousness; ill at ease.
7. Failure to participate in activities.
8. Over emphasis on money; interest only in the best dollar offer.
9. Unwilling to start at the bottom; expects too much too soon.
10. Makes excuses; evasiveness; hedges at unfavorable factors in record.
11. Lack of tact.
12. Lack of maturity.

13. Lack of courtesy; ill mannered.
14. Lack of vitality.
15. Fails to look interviewer in the eye.
16. Indecision.
17. Sloppy application blank.
18. Little sense of humor.
19. Lack of knowledge of field of specialization.
20. Parents make decision for him.
21. Emphasis on whom he knows.
22. Synical.
23. Lazy.
24. Intolerant; strong prejudices.
25. Narrow interests.
26. No interest in community activities.
27. Inability to take criticism.
28. Lack of appreciation of the value of experience.
29. Radical ideas.
30. Late to interview without good reason.
31. Failure to express appreciation for interviewer's time.
32. Asks no questions about the job.
33. Indefinite response to questions.

The following are questions most asked during interviews:

1. What are your future vocational plans?
2. What are your hobbies?
3. In what type of position are you most interested?
4. Why do you think you might like to work for our institution?
5. What jobs have you held? Why did you leave?
6. Why did you choose your particular field of work?
7. What percentage of your college expenses did you earn? How?
8. How did you spend your vacations while you were in college?
9. What do you know about our institution?
10. What qualifications do you have that make you feel you will be successful in your field?
11. Do you prefer any specific geographic location? Why?
12. How much money do you hope to earn at age thirty? Thirty-five? Forty? Forty-five?
13. How did you rank in your graduating class in high school? Where did you rank in college?
14. What personal characteristics are necessary for success in your chosen field?
15. Why do you think you would like this particular job?
16. Do you prefer working with others or by yourself?
17. What kind of boss do you prefer?
18. Are you primarily interested in making money or do you feel that service to your fellow man is a satisfactory accomplishment?
19. Can you take instructions without feeling upset?
20. How did previous employers treat you?
21. What have you learned from some of the jobs you held?
22. Can you get recommendations from previous employers?
23. What do you know about opportunities in the field in which you are trained?
24. How long do you expect to work?
25. How old were you when you became self-supporting?
26. Do you like routine work?
27. Do you like regular hours?
28. What size city do you prefer?

29. When did you first contribute to family income?
30. What is your major weakness?
31. Define cooperation!
32. Do you have an analytical mind?
33. Are you eager to please?
34. What do you do to keep in good physical condition?
35. Have you any serious illness or injury?
36. What job in our institution would you choose if you were entirely free to do so?
37. Is it an effort for you to be tolerant of persons with a background and interest different from your own?
38. What type of books have you read?
39. What jobs have you enjoyed the most? The least? Why?
40. What are your own special abilities?
41. Do you like to travel?
42. How do you feel about overtime work?
43. What kind of work interests you?
44. What are the advantages of your chosen field?
45. Are you interested in research?
46. What have you done which shows initiative and willingness to work?

Follow-Up

Remember that courtesy is good business and that a letter can show a prospective employer that you cared enough to follow up your job seeking activities. When an answer is received, a letter of acknowledgement should be written. If a job offer is received, express your appreciation, and let the employer know the date you expect to make a decision regarding the offer. If your application is rejected, it is no less important to thank the institution for considering you for the position. If you decide to decline the offer, write doing so, not forgetting to express your appreciation for the interest shown by the company in you. It may be necessary to write concerning the status of your application. You should briefly recapitulate the history of that application and explain why you need to know the status of the application, and adding note of thanks for cooperation. If you need additional information about the institution and the job under consideration, let the institution know you're interested, express thanks for cooperation, and ask for the needed information, but be specific in making the request.

Accepting a Job Offer

You have to think about all the factors involved with each job offer and then decide whether to accept it, but first ask yourself:

1. Do you and the job match as you start your career?
2. Will you be proud of the institution?
3. Do you feel you can get along with and work with your new boss and the the other employees?
4. Based on the economic climate of the country and of this institution, will the job be reasonably secure?
5. How many solid offers do you have?
6. How badly do you need a job?
7. Is the salary reasonable and fair?

Once you've decided and accepted, stay with you decision and give the new job your best.